

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of the Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Macrina Morales. I am a resident of New Haven and I am an immigrant.

I am in support of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS OLD FOR A PERSON ELIGIBLE BY INCOME TO OBTAIN HEALTH CARE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY to age 18, regardless of immigration status, is an important step in ensuring that our immigrant community has access to the health care we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I have three daughters. Two of them have DACA and the youngest was born here. The two older ones, before they had DACA, did not have insurance. So their checkups were not frequent. Sometimes I didn't take them because I had to pay for the physical. That's why I think it's important to have health insurance. That affected them because they couldn't go to the dentist or eye doctor often. If they didn't say they had a toothache, we wouldn't go to the dentist. I think that maybe their eyesight, because they didn't have an eye checkup sooner, maybe they wouldn't have needed to increase the prescription of their glasses. But because they didn't have medical insurance, they couldn't get the checkup.

Additionally, many times I have not gone for a checkup because the insurance is very expensive. I am diabetic and sometimes I need a checkup and I don't get it because I can't afford it. I need to have insurance so I can be more consistently checking my health so I don't lose my eyesight as a diabetic.

I was also lacking calcium, so my teeth are very bad. So far, I have wanted to get my teeth fixed but it is very expensive to go to the dentist. I have lost 4 teeth so far. If I had a doctor, he would have told me I was low on calcium and I would still have my teeth.

This bill is important because it means that children would have better health. And not only physical health but also mental health. Many times they feel less than other children because they don't have insurance. Many times, children may hear that other children go to the dentist and have physicals all the time. When they compare themselves to their peers, they mentally have the idea that they are inferior to the other children and that the other children are worth more than themselves.

I support SB 284 and ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Moving forward, I ask the committee to work to open access to all immigrants, regardless of age.